

Rochdale Metropolitan borough Council
Children's Services – Social Care
Social Work Caseloads Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to set out the Service's aspirations in respect of social work caseloads across the service.

There is no clear national or local guidance regarding caseloads, a number of local authorities use different caseload weighting loads. As a leadership team we bring a collective experience of managing and leading social work teams and services, upon which we base our proposals. The Children's Social Care Service re-model implemented in April 2014 was designed and will be delivered with a strategy of 'front-loading' the Service. In summary this means that due to a greater resource allocation has been apportioned to the 'front' of the services (MASS and First Response) in order to be more responsive, ensure children and their families get the right service at the right time, thus preventing the unnecessary escalation of needs. It is therefore expected that over time caseloads within Children's Social Care will reduce allowing increasing engagement with children, their families and partner agencies can be effective with an eye to prevention.

Due to the expectation that caseloads elsewhere in the service will be managed on a 'planned' basis these are slightly higher, but will be maintained at a manageable level to ensure that direct work with children and families can be undertaken by a Social Worker and that reflective practice supervision can be delivered by Practice Managers.

Service Specifics:

1. Multi-Agency Screening Service (incorporating Sunrise)
 - A Practice Manager with responsibility for co-ordinating the MASS will not have social workers to supervise. They will have line management responsibility for the Referral Information Co-ordinators.
 - A Practice Manager will have responsibility for the social work aspects of the Sunrise team having management/supervisory responsibility for 4 social workers (fte).
 - Sunrise social workers will not have statutory case work responsibility but will be co-workers for children/young people who have an allocated Social Worker; working with circa 15 cases to enable them to undertake CSE specific risk assessments, undertake preventative and direct work in respect the risks for the young person.

2. First Response and Child in Need
 - There will be 6 social work teams within this service each with a Practice Manager, each team will have between 6- 8 social workers.
 - Practice Managers – will have responsibility for line management/supervision of between 6 -8 social workers (fte)
 - Social workers - we aim for them to have allocated children circa 18 and will undertake one week in 6 on duty in the MASS were they will be allocated Single Assessments and Section 47 enquiries.

3. Children with Disabilities
 - The Children with Disabilities Team is a multi-disciplinary team which consists of Occupational Therapists, Resource staff who work on short break provision and Early Years Workers. The Team sit alongside Education staff such as Educational Psychologists and Specialist Teachers and support staff with a team of social workers who undertake the statutory elements of the work.

- The social work Practice Manager will have overall line management/supervisory responsibility for an Advanced Practitioner, 5 Social Workers (fte), & 2 Social Care Workers.
- The Advanced Practitioner will have a reduced caseload of circa 15 – which will be complex cases.
- The Social Workers will be allocated circa 25 cases with an aspiration of reducing this to circa 20 in the next 12 months.
- The Social Care workers will hold a case load of circa 30 stable, review cases.

4. Child Protection and Care Proceedings

- Practice Managers will have responsibility for line management and supervision of 5/6 social workers (fte) and a Social Care Worker
- Social workers will have allocated circa 20-22 children with an aspiration to reduce this to between 18-20 during the next 12 months.
- Social Care Workers will work alongside the Social Workers adding value and undertaking specific tasks as required. They may be allocated circa 8 Child in Need cases following a social work assessment

5. Cared for Children

5.1 Field Work Teams

- There will be 3 Cared for Children teams within the Service
- In each team there will be a Practice Manager, 7 social workers and 4 personal advisors.
- The Practice Manager will have line management/supervisory responsibility for 7 social workers and 4 personal advisors.
- The social workers will have circa 20 children/young people.
- The Personal Advisors will have a maximum of 20 allocated children/young people, aged over 18. The Personal Advisors will have a maximum of 10 children aged 16 – 18.
 - The Practice Manager is responsible for over-seeing those young people who no longer request a service, post-18.

5.2 Fostering

- There will be three teams across the service – Recruited Carers (2 teams) and Connected Persons (1 team)
- *Recruited Carers* Practice Managers will have line management/supervisory responsibility for 4/5 social workers, 2 Support Workers and one training officer.
- *Recruited Carers* Social Workers will have a caseload circa 20 fostering households, plus 2 foster carer recruitment assessments
- *Connected Persons* Practice Manager will have line management / supervisory responsibility for 5 Social Workers and 1 Support Worker
- *Connected Persons* Social Workers will have a caseload of circa 4/5 assessments plus circa 9 fostering households. Social Workers also undertake emergency Regulation 24 Assessments as required (approximately 1 – 2 per month)

5.3 Adoption

There will be 3 Adoption Teams within this Service – Recruitment and Assessment, Family Finding and Post-Adoption / Post-SGO Support

- There will be two Practice Managers across the teams – one over Recruitment and Assessment and Adoption Panel and one over Family Finding and Post-Adoption / Post-SGO Support
- *Recruitment and Assessment* Practice Managers will have line management/supervisory responsibility for 4 Social Workers and 1 support worker

- *Recruitment and Assessment* Social Workers will have a caseload of 5 / 6 Stage 1 and Stage 2 assessments, 3 – 4 family finding cases, 1 step-parenting assessment and 3 – 4 families with children placed
- *Family Finding and Post-Adoption / Post-SGO Support* Practice Manager will have line management / supervisory responsibility for 7 Social Workers and 1 Support Worker
- *Family Finding and Post-Adoption / Post-SGO Support* Social Workers will have a caseload of between 19 and 23 cases, including full family finding cases and monitoring of cases that have been to Gateway.
- *Family Finding and Post-Adoption / Post-SGO Support Team* Adoption Support Worker will have a caseload of between 10 and 20 cases, including full family finding cases and monitoring of cases that have been to Gateway.
- *Family Finding and Post-Adoption / Post-SGO Support* – included in this work is facilitating support groups, delivering training and facilitating letterbox contact

6. Youth Offending Team

- The Youth Offending Team is a multi-disciplinary team which consists of social workers, support workers, police staff, health staff, education welfare, substance misuse worker, careers advisors and probation officers.
- Operational managers have line management responsibilities for up to 10 members of staff each from Rochdale & Bury, as well as providing daily support to seconded staff from the partner agencies.
- Social workers have caseloads of approximately 12 to 15 cases that have to be seen in accordance with the National Standards for Youth Justice. These are orders made by the courts and include Youth Rehabilitation Order, Referral Orders and Custody.
- This will mean contacts vary from 7 a week to 2 a month, dependant on the risk and vulnerability of the young person subject to the court order.

Support is provided in meeting the National Standards requirements by support workers and seconded staff from the partnership agencies

Supported Year in Employment (for Newly Qualified Social Workers)

1. Learning Agreement

A Learning Agreement should be completed at the beginning of the ASYE programme setting out the dates of the programme and reviews, supervision sessions and how the NQSW's workload will be managed. It should also include a Personal Development Plan and the length of time to be devoted to protected development. The Learning Agreement should also set out how the NQSW will collect evidence for their Portfolio and the process by which this will be assessed. The Learning Agreement should be signed by the candidate, their Line Manager and Senior Manager and their assessor if they are different from or acting in addition to the candidate's Line Manager.

2. Regular good quality reflective Supervision

The suggested frequency of supervision in Rochdale is fortnightly during the ASYE programme taking place with the candidate's line manager and mentor alternatively and should include time for the NQSW to reflect on their work, its affect upon them and their development needs in an open and well supported way and their progress against the PCF.

3. Workload management

It should be protected in order to enable the NQSW to spend 10% of their time in ASYE developmental activities and should be specified in the Learning Agreement. Caseload should build up incrementally in both number and complexity, in line with NQSWs

confidence and capability and by the end of the programme should equate to 90% of the caseload held by those in year two or above.

Children's Social Care Senior Management Team
January 2015